



# **FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

**Reviewed by: Trustees (Audit/Risk  
Committee)**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

West Norfolk Academies Trust (WNAT) will meet the duties placed upon them by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order 2005 by ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all students, staff, visitors and contractors are protected from the risk of fire whilst on the premises.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (commonly referred to as the FSO) came into force on 1st October 2006. The purpose of the legislation is to place a greater emphasis on fire prevention by ensuring that all persons responsible for premises comply with their statutory duties and implement the general fire precautions which are needed to protect all persons from death or injury in the case of fire.

This Policy explains how the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that, where possible, fire is prevented and that any fire risks are adequately controlled.

## **2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

The WNAT Fire Policy forms part of the WNAT Health and Safety Policy and in common with that policy extends through the all schools, with specific responsibilities as below:

### **2.1 Trustees**

Trustees must ensure that an appropriate policy is in place and that arrangements are made for its effective implementation

### **2.2 Headteachers**

The Headteacher has the ultimate responsibility for the implementation and management of this policy

### **2.3 Chief Finance Operations Officer (CFOO)**

The CFOO is responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy and its role within the School's Health and Safety Policy

### **2.4 Trust Estates Manager**

The Estates Manager is responsible for ensuring statutory compliance in regards to fire safety is maintained across the WNAT estate as per Paragraph 4 – Statutory requirements

### **2.5 Site managers/ Caretaker (Duty holder)**

Within Secondary schools the site manager is responsible for the day to day management of fire safety as required in Paragraph 5 – Managing fire safety.

Within Primary schools the caretaker is responsible for the day to day management of fire safety as required in Paragraph 5 – Managing fire safety

## **2.6 All Employees**

All employees have the responsibility to cooperate and to ensure that the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and must not do anything that will place themselves or other people at risk.

## **3. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- To safeguard all persons from death or injury in the event of fire by the effective management of fire safety
- To minimise the risk of fire and to limit fire spread
- To minimise the potential for fire to disrupt services, damage buildings and equipment, or harm the environment.

## **4. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

WNAT Estates Manager is responsible for ensuring that all statutory requirements in relation to fire safety are in place and compliant.

1. Ensure that a Fire Risk Assessment is carried out at all school sites, and that findings are actioned or mitigated against
2. Provide appropriate training in Fire Awareness for all staff employed within a WNAT buildings
3. Ensure that all servicing and inspection requirements are in date through regular compliance inspections/ audits.
4. Ensure that all schools have in place suitable evacuation plans and conduct termly evacuation drills
5. Comply with the HSE, Police or Fire service regarding investigation following any incident involving fire
6. Monitor and review this policy on a regular basis so as to ensure that any new risk or alteration to regulations is addressed.

## **5. MANAGING FIRE SAFETY**

WNAT has delegated day to day responsibility for managing fire safety to the 'duty holder'.

The duty holder will:

1. Ensure that all means of escape are properly maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for safe and effective use at all times
2. Maintain, in good working order, all fire fighting appliances and devices as follows
  - a) Fire detection – Weekly activation point testing
  - b) Fire fighting equipment – Monthly on-site inspection
  - c) Notices and signage relating to fire procedures – Regularly inspect
  - d) Means of escape, considering the needs of any disabled user. – Regularly inspect
3. Ensure that contracted monitoring requirements as per paragraph 6 are completed and in date with all findings actioned or mitigated against promptly
4. Complete actions or implement mitigation for issues identified in the fire risk assessment
5. Arrange and schedule termly evacuation drills and record the findings
6. Within Secondary schools site managers should ensure that all staff, students, contractors, visitors and third-party hirers are made aware of and comply with the school's fire procedures. Within primary schools this is the responsibility of the headteacher.
7. Identify any special risks, e.g. the storage of hazardous materials, and put in place appropriate procedures to minimise the risks
8. Issue and manage Hot works permit as per the information provided in Annex B to this policy. It is appreciated that within primary schools this may be the responsibility of the headteacher or Trust Estates Manager

## **6. MONITORING**

To assist in the management of fire systems WNAT utilises the services of various outside contracts to carry out effective monitoring of its duties. For secondary schools the duty holder is responsible for ensuring suitable contracts are in place. However, for primary

schools the responsibility is held by Norfolk Property Services (NPS) who are contracted to manage the maintenance and compliance of these schools.

Monitoring contracts should include

1. The school fire detection and alarm system is maintained quarterly
2. The school emergency lighting is checked monthly and an annual full discharge test is carried out
3. Fire fighting equipment is serviced annually
4. Completion of Fire Risk Assessment

## **7. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT (FRA)**

The FRA identifies who will be at risk if there is a fire, where people may be working and who else may be at risk, either in the premises or nearby, such as members of the public, visiting contractors, etc, and where these people are likely to be located. FRAs must be reviewed or renewed following any alterations to the school site such as building improvements or alterations to the internal layout

For large sites an FRA must be completed annually by a qualified Subject Matter Expert (SME). It is also recommended that where numerous buildings are located on one site that a separate FRA be conducted for each building. For smaller sites it is acceptable for a SME to complete an FRA every 2 years although a review should be conducted annually by the headteacher.

FRAs will be stored electronically with the respective school Estates Management System (EMS).

## **8. FIRE SAFETY TRAINING**

All staff irrespective of role within WNAT should receive basic fire safety information as part of their induction process. This information must include the location of the assemble point and an awareness of the school evacuation plan. This should be recorded as part of the individual's induction process

All staff irrespective of role must complete annual fire safety awareness training.

## **9. EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

A full evacuation drill must be conducted at the start of the Autumn term to ensure new students and staff are aware of the process and procedures required. Following this initial evacuation drill, a following two drills must be completed in the remaining terms throughout the academic year.

Evacuation drills must be conducted as if a real fire was occurring. Staff should refrain from conducting sweeps of the building as this would unlikely occur during a real event.

**The key point to note is life before materials and as such all students, staff, visitors and contractors are to leave at the NEAREST exit point.**

**For large sites it is highly unlikely that a full and accurate count will be conducted before the emergency services arrive on scene. In this case the responsible person must inform the lead emergency service member that it CANNOT be confirmed if all students, staff, visitors or contractors have left the building. They will then conduct a sweep using correct equipment.**

Evacuation plans and procedures should be clearly identified to all staff, students, visitors and contractors. Therefore, the plan should be displayed in suitable locations such as reception where the assemble pint must be clearly indicated. Additionally, fire alarm testing schedules should be displayed in reception to ensure visitors and contractors are made aware.

An evacuation plan example is available at Annex A to this policy and should be adapted to suit each school site accordingly. The document also includes specific Guidance on the Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Buildings.

## **Annex A to West Norfolk Academies Trust Fire Policy**

*Note: This is an example of an evacuation procedure and should be adapted to suit each school site*

### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

#### **UPON DISCOVERING A FIRE,**

Break the glass of the nearest activation point and shout 'FIRE' to raise awareness in the immediate area

#### **UPON HEARING THE ALARM**

Reception rings 999 as soon as possible and informs the evacuation lead that the fire service has been notified.

#### **ALL PERSONS PROCEED TO ASSEMBLY POINT VIA THE NEAREST EXIT**

Where appropriate and if safe to do so;

- Ensure Master switches for gas and electricity are off and windows closed.
- In classrooms, students nearest windows should be told to close them.
- Staff assemble students and instruct them to proceed to the Assembly Point via the most direct route away from the fire
- All persons should walk rapidly and NOT run.
- The classroom door should be closed behind the last person to leave.
- Use the directed route - the quickest fire escape route is displayed in each room - unless a blockage makes this impossible. Be prepared to find an alternative route if necessary.
- Should the alarm ring during Break or Lunchtime all persons should leave the building by the nearest safe fire exit and proceed to the Assembly Point. Staff should assist this process where possible without putting themselves at risk.
- **Under no circumstances should staff or pupils return to their form rooms.**
- Site managers/ caretakers should attempt to identify the source of the fire from external visual observation. Where safe to do so, the zone triggered by the alarm will be noted.
- Site managers/ Caretakers are to meet the fire service at the main gate and control entry to the site. The fire service will be directed to the required area.



- **Further persons should not be allowed on site during the evacuation procedure**

## **PROCEDURE FOR ASSEMBLY AND ROLL CALL**

Note that in the event of a fire the emergency services will respond rapidly. Therefore, it is possible that first response will arrive before a full roll call can be completed. In this case the fire service must be informed that the school CANNOT confirm if all persons are accounted for.

- Conduct a roll call to account for Students AND staff (*The process of how this is carried out should be inserted for each school*)
- Account for all visitors and contractors. WNAT schools utilize an electronic sign in procedure for all visitors and contractors. This system should be utilized to account for persons.

### **ROLL CALL PROCEDURE (Example)**

- Forms/ Classes line up in alphabetical order at Assembly Point.
- FORM TEACHERS collect registers from Receptionist and supervise roll call. Once roll call is completed, report absences to responsible person.
- STAFF Procedure: [*Detail what is in place*].
- Once the roll call is complete the responsible person should liaise with the fire service upon arrival at the school.
- **No-one should leave the Assembly Point until instructed to do so by the Headteacher under the guidance of the fire service**

## **Guidance on the Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Buildings**

**Students and employees** with a disability should already have been identified and information held in their respective Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) should be included in the evacuation plan. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure the additional needs of students are included in the evacuation plan although assistance by the site manager may be beneficial

Disabled staff must have identified themselves to the Headteacher and any specific requirements must be addressed as soon as they are known and should be included in the evacuation plan

**Visitors with disabilities:** On arrival, disabled visitors to the School should be asked to identify any special requirements in the case of an emergency evacuation. The person hosting the visitor should ensure the visitor's safety in the event of an emergency evacuation.

A "buddy" may be appointed for any student or employee requiring assistance in an emergency evacuation.

Where teachers have a student with a known disability, they must ensure that that student is aware that the alarm has been triggered and that they follow the evacuation procedure accordingly.

### **Specific Evacuation Requirements**

#### *Wheelchair users/Persons with Mobility Difficulty*

Wheelchair users or any person with difficulty walking (e.g. anyone temporarily using crutches) should wait until everyone else has left the room before making their way to the exit, assisted by their "buddy" or other third party if required.

Wherever possible (i.e. when on ground floors) all persons, including wheelchair users, should make their own way out of the building by utilising the fire escape routes.

Whenever the route is blocked or the person is above ground floor, wheelchair users must be either assisted by their "buddy" or other third party. When evacuating the upper floors of the buildings, anyone unable to leave without assistance should wait for assistance in the refuge areas [detail where if applicable]. The use of the term "Refuge" is intended to mean a place where people can safely wait for a period of time whilst the evacuation process is being undertaken. It is not a place to leave people for the duration of the alarm, but it has been selected for its additional protection from fire, meaning that it will remain a safe place to wait.

### **Lifts must not be used during an emergency evacuation**

## **Annex B to West Norfolk Academies Trust Fire Policy**

### **Hot works arrangement**

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#### **Introduction**

This annex sets out the procedures and guidance for the health and safety management of hot working activities undertaken by those who work on the West Norfolk Academies Trust estate. For the purposes of this annex hot working means any activity or process that generates flame, heat or spark and introduces (or presents) a foreseeable risk of fire or explosion through a source of ignition by means of tools or equipment either:

- intentionally arising from working methods (with or without the use of a naked flame) such as welding, flame-cutting, soldering, brazing; or
- the unintentional generation of heat or sparks, by the use of power/hand tools e.g. grinding and the use of disc-cutters.

Over the years hot working has resulted in many major fires and explosions which have caused a number of fatalities and serious injuries as well as property/asset losses. Where reasonably practicable the need for hot working should be eliminated by the use of other processes that do not involve the application or generation of heat or sparks. Flammable liquids and vapours such as petrol, diesel, fuel oil, paints, solvents, glue, dusts etc. are found in many places of work and under certain conditions (i.e. hot working) can explode violently. Just a teaspoon of petrol in a drum can be enough to cause an explosion, when heated and turned into a vapour.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **Executive Head**

It is the responsibility of the Executive Head to ensure that suitable systems are in place and that adequate resources are made available for hot work to be conducted in accordance with appropriate safe systems of work that may include the use of a Permit to Work.

##### **Headteacher/Managers**

The Headteacher/Manager (owner of the task) is responsible for ensuring that for any activity undertaken by West Norfolk Academies Trust staff involving hot working, that a risk assessment is conducted by a competent person having sufficient experience and training in all associated risks. The risk assessment should consider:

- isolating/shielding plant/equipment from the effects of heat;
- the transference of heat to the surrounding work environment;
- the environment in which the activity is to be carried out (including what is above, below and in the immediate vicinity) and the possibility of explosive atmospheres;
- all other task related hazards (non-heat related).

A written safe system of work should be developed and maintained for all hot working activities unless the risk assessment has identified that it is not necessary. When developing a safe system of work for hot working, the following should be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- work equipment selected is suitable for the activity, is properly maintained and where appropriate, adequately secured;
- ensure equipment is visually inspected and is safe to use before commencing the work;
- all fixed services that may be affected by the activity (oil, gas, electricity, etc.) are located and protected (isolated, locked, vented, etc.);
- the need for all combustible/flammable material to be removed/protected;
- actions required to minimise the possibility of explosive atmospheres; • area secured (access control, etc.);
- the need for appropriate fire prevention measures and firefighting equipment;
- monitoring the work area to ensure that a fire does not start after the activity is complete;
- area adequately ventilated and/or personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE) issued/used;
- precautions have been taken to minimise the release of sparks, hazardous emissions, etc;
- there is no doubt as to who has overall control of the work.

Where the risk assessment has identified a significant risk a Permit To Work (PTW) should be raised and communicated to all relevant staff. The manager should ensure that all control measures have been implemented prior to commencement of the work. The information that should be contained in a PTW for hot working will depend on each activity but will normally include:

- the location and nature of the work;
- the proposed time and duration of the work;
- the limits of time for which the PTW is valid;
- the precautions to be taken before the work starts, during the work (if deemed necessary appointing of a competent and trained firewatcher), and on completion of the work (this may need to be monitored for several hours after the work is completed);
- the requirement for authorisation, acceptance, completion and cancellation signatures;
- the person in direct control of the work. The line manager is responsible for ensuring hot working is only carried out by competent persons. They should monitor the hot work activity to ensure the work is carried out in line with the safe system of work and on completion of the work the area has been left in a safe condition. Steps to ensure that an area is left safe following a hot working activity may include:
  - the use of fire watchers (monitoring an area for a defined period of time for signs of smouldering materials or the onset of fire);
  - accelerated cooling/damping down of the area/equipment;
  - all safety systems reinstated (smoke detector covers removed etc);
  - area is cleared of equipment/debris.

#### All Staff

All West Norfolk Academies Trust staff engaged in hot working must comply with the required controls defined in the safe system of work/permit to work and cooperate with management by undertaking appropriate instruction and training.

#### Legislation and Guidance

1. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act
2. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
3. The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)
4. HSE - L137 Approved Code of Practice – Safe Maintenance, repair and cleaning procedures
5. HSE - INDG297 - Safety in Gas Welding, Cutting or Similar Processes
6. HSE - INDG314 - Hot work on small tanks and drums